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K'TAKA TRIO BAG SPORTS AWARDS

- Aditi Ashok (extreme left) has won the Arjuna Award for her achievements in golf
- Hockey coach Jude Felix (left) has been conferred the Dronacharya Award
- Former athletics coach Purushottam Rai will receive the same for lifetime achievement
- Khel Ratnas are Rohit Sharma, Manika Batra, T Mariyappan, Rani Rampal and Vinesh Phogat | P13

The New Indian Express
Wishes its readers on the occasion of

GANESH CHATURTHI

The offices and press of TNIE will remain closed today and there will be no issue dated August 23, 2020

EXPRESS READ

EC: Voters to get gloves at booths

New Delhi: Voters will be provided with gloves to press the EVM button and Covid-19 patients in quarantine will be allowed to vote at the last hour of the polling day, according to broad guidelines issued by Election Commission on Friday for holding elections during the Covid-19. P9

Ashwani Bhatia appointed MD of SBI

New Delhi: The government has appointed Ashwani Bhatia as the next MD of India's largest PSU bank SBI. Currently, he serves as MD and CEO of SBI Mutual Fund, and is tipped to be a frontrunner for the post through the selection process. P12

Kerala moves HC on T'puram airport

Kochi: The Kerala government on Friday moved the High Court seeking a stay on further proceedings in leasing out Thiruvananthapuram International airport to Adani Enterprises. Unless the stay is granted, it will be put to irreparable injury and hardship, the state government said. P7

India steps up heat on China

Visa curbs for Chinese nationals; Rlys scraps tender to keep out CRRC Pioneer Electric

PUSHKAR BANAKAR @New Delhi

AFTER banning Chinese apps and tweaking FDI rules to keep away Chinese investments, the Centre is now planning to tighten visa rules for Chinese businessmen, students and workers. From now on, Chinese nationals will be issued visa only after a security clearance is obtained, sources said.

In another move targeting China, the Railways on Friday announced the cancellation of the tender for manufacturing 44 semi-high speed Vande Bharat Express trains.

"Fresh tender will be floated within a week as per Revised Public Procurement (Preference to Make in India) order," the rail ministry tweeted.

The tender, floated last month, had attracted only a Chinese joint venture, CRRC Pioneer Electric, as the foreign player among six participants. The tender had called firms to bid for the supply of electrical equipment for 44 sets of high-speed Vande Bharat express trains with 16 coaches each.

The concerted moves taken by the Centre follow the Union education ministry's review of ties between Indian and Chinese universities, especially the local chapters of Confucius Institutes.

The agreements between Indian and Chinese institutes are likely to be cut down to size. "Over 50 MoUs signed between Chinese universities and prestigious Indian institutes like IITs, JNU, BHU and others are under the government scanner," sources said.

India has been stepping up the heat on China since the June 15 violent face-off between Indian and Chinese troops along the LAC.

However, some experts feel New Delhi's aggressive steps to restrict Chinese presence in India could backfire as the number of Indians travelling to China is three times than the Chinese flow to India.

"We should also take into consideration any counter measures from China," said B R Deepak, chairperson of Centre for Chinese and South Asian Studies at JNU.

The latest decisions will only worsen the already frayed ties between New Delhi and Beijing, says Russia-based political analyst Andrew Korybko.

Confucius Institutes

These are educational partnerships funded by the Chinese govt to promote Mandarin as a foreign language. Confucius Institutes have tie-ups with universities in some 160 countries

Fire personnel try to douse the flames at Srisailam power station on Thursday night

9 charred in inferno at T'gana power station

V V BALAKRISHNA @Hyderabad

NINE employees—seven of TS Genco and two of a private battery company—were charred to death on Thursday night after a fire broke out in the underground hydro-electric power station in Srisailam in Telangana.

Three other Genco employees who were injured are undergoing treatment at the Genco hospital located near the plant. According to official sources, the fire broke out at 10.30 pm on Thursday. It was reportedly caused by a short circuit in an auxiliary voltage transformer of the fourth unit of the power station.

"It appears the fire had started in one of the panels, near the units 4, 5 and 6," one official said. Eighteen employees were working in the power station at the time of the incident. Eight of them came out safely, but nine stayed inside, trying to put out the blaze. The fire spread quickly, trapping them.

When they realised that they could not put out the fire, they tried to run outside, but it was too late.

CONTINUED ON: P7

CET results: 1.5L qualify for engineering seats

Rakshith M

Sai Vivek P

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

THE Karnataka Examination Authority (KEA) on Friday released the results of the Common Entrance Test (KCET) 2020, which was held on July 30 and 31. It has taken just 21 days for the results to be out.

In all, 1,53,470 students qualified for engineering seats, while for agriculture 1,27,627 students, veterinary sciences 1,29,666, AYUSH 1,29,611 and pharma 1,55,552. As many as 1,29,666 students have secured ranks for veterinary, 1,29,611 for yoga and naturopathy and 1,55,552 for B-Pharma and D-Pharma.

Rakshith M of RV PUC College, Bengaluru bagged the first rank in engineering, while Sai Vivek P from Narayana E-Techno School in Bengaluru bagged the first rank in both veterinary sciences and pharma. Varun Gowda A B, from Expert PU College, Mangaluru, bagged first rank in B.Sc Agriculture. P5

EX-FIN SECRETARY RAJIV KUMAR TO REPLACE LAVASA AS EC

New Delhi: Former Union finance secretary Rajiv Kumar has been appointed Election Commissioner, the Law Ministry said in a notification on Friday. Kumar will take charge the day Election Commissioner Ashok Lavasa leaves office on August 31. The outgoing EC is set to join the Asian Development Bank as its vice-president.

NO GOING BACK

Centre: NEET, JEE exams to be on schedule

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @New Delhi

DESPITE mounting pressure from students and parents to postpone the JEE (Main) and NEET entrance exams due to Covid-19, the Centre on Friday reiterated that the exams will be held as scheduled in September.

Government said in a statement that more than 75% of students registered for JEE have already downloaded their admit cards, indicating that a majority wants the exams held.

The National Testing Agency which conducts both JEE and NEET said that of the 8.58 lakh candidates registered for JEE, 6.49 lakh have downloaded their admit cards.

The admit cards for NEET, which is planned for September 13, is expected to be out in the coming days.

The statement comes days after the Supreme Court on Monday junked a petition to have these tests postponed in view of the pandemic.

JEE (Main) will be held between September 1 and 6, while NEET is scheduled for September 13.

Meanwhile, the Union Home Ministry in a circular issued on Friday noted that 99.07% of JEE(Main) aspirants have been allotted their preferred exam centers, and so far, only 120 have requested a change, which is being looked into.